

**DAP says wants Anwar as PM to cut budget deficit**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, July 9 — The DAP has again named Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as its choice candidate for prime minister, saying today that the country's former number two was needed to turn Malaysia's deficit budget into a surplus.

Party secretary-general Lim Guan Eng pointed out that it was during Anwar's tenure as deputy prime minister in 1997 when Malaysia last ran a budget surplus and since then, the country has experienced 15 consecutive years of budget deficits.

"Our government debt has increased by five times from RM89 billion in 1997 to RM470 billion as at March 2012 compared to the increase in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) by only threefold.... which is why we want Anwar as the new prime minister to turn around the deficit budget into a surplus budget," Lim (picture) said in a statement here.

Lim's remarks today come following Anwar's recent announcement of his plan to retire from politics if Pakatan Rakyat (PR) fails to wrest federal power in the coming polls.

The 65-year-old politician's quit plan has earned criticism from the ruling Umno, whose leaders have described it as a mere ploy to gain support ahead of the 13th general election.

The ruling party has also claimed that despite the DAP's repeatedly pronounced support for Anwar as prime minister, party leaders are also eyeing the prestigious post.

In a front-paged article in Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia today, it was claimed that the DAP plans to grab the lion's share of seats in Parliament come the next polls by fielding candidates in 90 of the 222 seats up for grabs.

PAS and PKR, said the article, which cited several blogs as its sources, would only be contesting in 66 seats.

But despite the allegations, Lim insisted today that Anwar remains the DAP's and PR's candidate for prime minister, citing the latter's experience in handling the nation's finances.

The Bagan MP repeated his fear that if Barisan Nasional (BN) was to continue its reign, government debt would continue to grow beyond recovery.

Pointing to Putrajaya's recent RM13.8 billion 2012 supplementary budget, Lim said that by year end, government debt was likely to soar beyond RM500 billion.

"And this does not even include the worrying increase in the contingent liabilities that are not officially on the books amounting to nearly RM110 billion.

"If contingent liabilities are added to official government debt, our debt would increase to more than RM600 billion or RM 21,500 each to be paid by the 28 million Malaysians," he said.

In contrast to BN's "fiscal irresponsibility", said Lim, state governments under PR rule have successfully recorded budget surpluses every year and have even managed to reduce their debts.

He pointed out that under his administration, the Penang government's debts had successfully been reduced by 95 per cent or RM600 million from RM630 million at March 8, 2008.

"All this was achieved not by BN's deceit but by straight talking of running a clean government based on CAT governance of competency, accountability and transparency," he said.

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